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ABSTRACT

This study describes the special needs of women returning to school after an interruption for marriage or employment. One hundred-fifty questionnaires were distributed during 1975 at Fresno City College in California; 90 were returned, of which 82 were usable. Eight problems, in order of importance, identified by returning women were: shortage of time, school-related anxiety, role conflict, money problems, child care, study skills, counseling deficiencies, and problems with instructors. Further, 60% of the respondents reported their families were not supportive of their return to school. Overall, three types of returning women were identified: (1) single women, in their 20's or 30's, probably divorced or separated with children to support, who are seeking a career and who are practical, confident, and purposive; (2) married women, in their 20's or 30's, with children at home, who attend school seeking a career or personal fulfillment, but who lack self-confidence; and (3) married women, in their 30's or 40's, with children 14 years and older, who attend school to fill empty time, who would like special counseling, and who are concerned about study skills. Recommendations made to meet the needs of the FCC's returning women included: expansion of financial aid opportunities, personal counseling, institutional commitment to women, and development of re-entry programs geared specifically to women. (Author/JDS)

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WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL NEEDS UPON RE-ENTRY TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR RESTRUCTURING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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by

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Fresno City College

A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

There is worldwide attention focused on women today. They are studied by experts for female characteristics, traditional role-playing functions,and psychological and cultural behavior patterns. They are examined in lengthy, historical perspectives as to their special relationships to men, to children, and to the community at large.

However, women seek a new self-image. They want equal recognition and a hand in pursuing their destiny as individuals, utilizing their uniqueness: their humanity. They are, in fact, part of a total humanistic revolution involving all persons--Black, Brown, Indian, the handicapped of any age--whose potential is denied. Women no longer wish to be isolated from the mainstream of American life. They seek a working model which solves basic problems in human relationships.

The impetus for this investigation grows out of two primary factors. One, the college is not attuned to the special needs of women. Two, sexism is pervasive in America, and women are still being conditioned from the cradle to see themselves as inferior beings who must take their subordinate position. Considering that population growth must stabilize, women no longer need to seek primary personal fulfillment

through the experience of motherhood. Yet, the majority of women are ill prepared to work save in jobs which are low paying--mainly in factory and in clerical work.

Fresno County has among its residents a significant number of adult women who have not continued their education for several reasons: (1) limited educational background, (2) inadequate financial resources, (3) family responsibilities, (4) limited communication skills, (5) cultural heritage.

In Dual Careers, a national longitudinal study of labor market experience of women, it is indicated that years of education bear the expected positive relationship to the rate of pay for both minority and white. However, minority women are less than half as likely (thirty percent vs. sixty-three percent) to be employed in white collar occupations (sixty percent of the time means clerical jobs).[1] Low earnings significantly affect the ability of women to purchase needed services. Low earnings affect the self-image and aspirations of women and perpetuate the concept of inferiority.

In California Women the findings of the Advisory Commission on the Status of Women show a significant gap between male and female income. Median earnings of women workers in 1970 was sixty percent

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[1] H. S. Parned, Shea and Spitz, Frederick A. Zeller & Associates, Center for Human Resource Research, Ohio State University, Dual Careers, Vol 1. U. S. Department of Labor (Washington: Government Printing Office, May 1970), pp. 111, 112, 135.

of the earnings of men. In 1968, twenty percent of the women but only eight percent of the men earned less than $3,000; sixty percent of women but only twenty percent of the men earned less than $5,000. At the upper end of the scale, only three percent of women but twenty-eight percent of men had earnings of $10,000 or more.[2] There are no figures, as yet, available to compare the earnings of men and women in Fresno.

Figures of the 1970 U.S. National Census indicate that:

1. 67% of women heads of poor families in the nation completed less than twelve years of school compared with 8% who had more than twelve years;

2. 28% of women heads of families with children have incomes below the defined poverty level (1971 Department of Labor);

3. there are 296,115 women heads of families in California;

4. there are 11,836 women heads of families in Fresno County;

5. there are 9,415 women heads of families in Fresno County on welfare (79% of all women heads of families in Fresno, October, 1973);

6. there are 4,296 women heads of families below poverty level in Fresno County (36.5% compared with 28% nationally);

7. there are 1,263 women heads of Black families (22.1% of all Black families in Fresno County);

8. there are 2,925 women heads of Chicano families (12.4% of all Chicano families in Fresno County).

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[2]California, California Women, Report of the Advisory Commission on the Status of Women (Sacramento: State of California, Documents Section), p. 63.

Also, an update of the 1970 census by the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, in 1972, revealed the following regarding the unemployment and underemployment of women in Fresno County:

1. Seventy-nine percent of women workers in Fresno County were employed in clerical, retail sales, service work, household work, and farm labor compared to 64 percent nationwide.[3]

2. These jobs, which require twelve years of schooling or less, commanded an annual median wage of $2,555 in 1966.[4]

3. The unemployment rate for women in Fresno County is 9.6 percent compared to a rate of 7.1 percent for men.

These unemployed and underemployed women, who are presently unable to compete successfully in the labor force, are further handicapped by poor self-concepts and a lack of self-confidence. In a society where achievement or value is measured by financial success, women are viewed as non-achievers or as failures. Because of feelings of low self-worth, these women are unlikely to attempt new educational experiences. Furthermore, educational alternatives, limited and limiting, are not designed to provide supportive services to women with these negative feelings.[5]

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[3]"Rebelling Women: The Reason," U.S. News and World Report (editorial), April 13, 1970, pp. 35-38.

[4]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Series p-60, No. 53.

[5]Fresno City College Application for Proposed Community Service Program Grant under Title I, Higher Education Act of 1965, February 1, 1974.

Single mothers are the poorest class of citizens in our community. In an interview with the office of the Director of Welfare for the County of Fresno, it was disclosed that there are 39,073 persons who receive welfare from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) as of June 30, 1974. Of this total given above, 8,923 are adult women recipients with a grand total of 25,629 children plus 409 "unborns."[6]

National employment statistics confirm the second class status of women in our society. According to the 1969 Handbook on Women Workers,[7] women comprised 37.1 percent of the labor force in 1968, which meant that 41.6 percent of women in America are working. Of women working, 57 percent are married with husband present, 22 percent are single, 9 percent widowed, 6 percent divorced, and 6 percent married with husband absent.

Of these women 49 percent are mothers with children over 6 and 29 percent have children under 6. According to statistics from the Underutilization of Women Workers,[8] women are three times as likely as men to earn less than $5,000 for year-round full-time work. Only 3 percent earn $10,000 a year or more compared with 28 percent of men.

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[6]Interview with Mrs. Vaux, Assistant Director, Department of Welfare, Fresno County, July 12, 1974.

[7]U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, 1969 Handbook on Women Workers (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969).

[8]U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, Underutilization of Women Workers (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1970).

Professional women are also underrepresented in their respective fields, according to the report. Starting salaries of college graduates were lower for women than for men in 1970. Women comprise only 22 percent of the faculty in institutions of higher education, 9 percent of the scientists, 7 percent of the physicians, 3 percent of lawyers, 1 percent of engineers, and 1 percent of federal judges.

Whilst it is claimed that there are physiological and biological differences between males and females, there is no reason these should either facilitate or interfere with intellectual mastery or with the acquisition of the competence prerequisite to a broad range of occupational functions. Yet, disproportionately large numbers of females are concentrated in so-called female occupations. For example, according to U. S. Bureau of Labor statistics, women constituted only 17 percent of managerial and administrative workers in 1971. While women made up 39 percent of professional and technical workers, 70 percent of these were either nurses or teachers, certainly not high-status professions. On the other hand, women were 75 percent of clerical workers and 62 percent of service workers, indicating over-representation in low paying, low-status occupational categories (World Almanac, 1973, p. 119; Gilbert, 1970). Even in those areas reputedly dominated by women, they are inadequately represented in management positions. For example, although 85 percent of elementary teachers are women, only 20 percent of elementary principals are women (NEA Research Division, 1971, 1972). One can only suppose ..... that this disappointing-record is due to attitudes, practices, and customs inherent in our culture.

As stated in the practicum proposal, the object of this study is to investigate self concept and learning theory as significant factors in the educational and vocational development of women students at a community college; to investigate institutional practices which inhibit full realization of their potential; to seek ways to enhance the status of women in our community and in our institutions.

Chapter 2

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Fresno City College, founded in 1910, has the distinction of being the first junior college in the State of California. Located in the central San Joaquin Valley, one of the richest agricultural areas in the country, Fresno City College joined with Reedley College in 1961 to become the State Center Community College District. The district, encompassing nearly 5,800 square miles, includes portions of Fresno, Madera, Kings, and Tulare Counties. Our service area has a population of approximately 450,000 persons.

The college is governed by a board of trustees composed of successful valley ranchers, professional and business men, and a new woman trustee recently elected to the board. Previously, the college emphasized transfer education; more currently, it has begun to develop significant vocational and technical-career programs. Additionally, the college has extended its philosophy, as a public community college, to reach the non-traditional student with very diverse backgrounds and needs.

However, there is a large segment of population in our attendance area which the college has generally neglected to serve. The institution is insensitive to the special needs of women who are educationally, financially, and culturally deprived.

In a rural community, particularly, women have traditionally been regarded as dependents and keepers of the household with empnasis on the role of wife and mother. Women need a new self-image. In order to advance the cause of equality for all citizens, the community college must make provisions for educational, vocational, and cultural experiences urgently needed by unique ethnic groups--the Chicano, the Black, the American Indian--the deprived and exploited in our society.

Institutional studies at Fresno City College fail to provide insight and data specifically relevant to the numerous problems women give as reasons for leaving school. A survey of one hundred returning women students, Fall, 1975, indicates that critical problems exist in our academic environment. Reasons for dropping out, as stated by the respondents, include inadequate or non-existing child care facilities (cf. the writer's practicum, Meeting the Needs of Educationally Disadvantaged Women: A Program for Re-Entry, 1974) which supports the need for a child care center on or near campus. Other reasons indicate emotional and financial stress as well as absence of special counseling. It appears from the dropout data that the first semester of school is critical for women who return after an interruption for marriage or a job.*

Keeping these concerns in mind, the writer began investigation of learning theory as it relates to, aids or hinders the progress of women students. Special focus was placed on the specific counseling needs as a first step toward academic success.

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*Note: (The institutional study (F.C.C. 1975) disclosed that there was a 21 percent dropout rate for men and 27 percent dropout rate for women).

The practicum seeks ways the college might address itself to the task of ameliorating attitudes and correcting imbalances which deny women a rich, successful participation in the educative process.

The writer's interest was further heightened by the sensitive, serious attention currently given by psychologists, counselors, and many other specialists to the area of self concept and self esteem as important factors in the changing role of women today.

In spite of awakening interest, however, Helen Astin calls to our attention in Young Women and Their Roles the need for scientific experimentation. She says, "the literature is almost devoid of studies that look at self concept and self esteem as mediators of career aspirations among women".(Youth, The Seventy-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 1975, pp. 419-434).

While some returning women students seek enrichment, the majority returns to the community college seeking a saleable skill. The writer's NOVA practicum, mentioned earlier, revealed that 71.8 percent of the 93 respondents ranked career information as the "first" need; the second, counseling.

In conclusion, Dr. Mines, national lecturer, NOVA U., postulates there are very different orientations, attitudes, and expectations of the "new"--the non-traditional student--entering community colleges throughout the nation.

The returning woman is faced with particular learning difficulties. It is imperative that Fresno City College become cognizant of the special needs of this new, non-traditional college student.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

What Research Has Shown About Self Concept and School Achievement Generally

It seems necessary to review what research has been shown generally about the development of self and self concept. In light of the upcoming discussion specifically relevant to woman, (the writer wishes to emphasize as Helen Astin pointed out earlier, that only within the last decade has research illuminated her special needs and concerns), thus the following is only a brief exposition of some of those theories:

All learning theorists would probably agree that no human can learn anything very well without some degree of ego strength, regardless of the theoretical learning situation.

Learning is difficult to define, Cohen tells us, "teaching causes learning". Others state it is a change of behavior. Some emphasize transactions with the environment or emphasize motivation. Studies are concerned with components of learning, high/low achievement; misdirected and unconscious motivation; societal factors; ethnic influences, to name a few areas.

Most educators agree, claims Roueche (1972), "that the individual is the key to the entire system of formal education". (p. 30)

According to Roueche and Pitman in A Modest Proposal: Students Can Learn (1972, p. 31) two major psychological schools of thought regarding learning may be identified: The cognitive field theory and the stimulus response theory. Others are subsumed and add to the confusion

as they develop or depart from these two schools. In the cognitive theory covert insight processes are emphasized while in the stimulus-response theory overt behaviors are the focus. An integration of these or an electic approach to learning seems appropriate in education. (Roueche and Pitman, 1974, p. 31). Cohen (1969) and others concur in this view. Such an approach places more emphasis on positive self-concepts, says Roueche.

Certain definitive aspects of research to date have significant bearing on the problem under discussion.

Self Concept and School Achievement, (a"little book"which offers data and history on the self) provides one definition. Purkey tells us:

> "There is a deepening interest in the individual's perception of himself and his situation as a major influence on his behavior.... The way in which a student views himself and his world are: (1) products of how others see him; (2) primary forces in his academic achievement".

Purkey continues "there are various definitions of the self given by" Lecky (1945), Rogers (1951), Jersild (1952), and Combs and Snugg (1959). We can arrive, claims Purkey, at a composite definition of the "self" as a complex and dynamic system of beliefs which an individual holds true about himself, each belief with a corresponding value". (p. 7).[9] He adds:

> "Parents mold and maintain self image. However, next to the home, the school is the single most important force in shaping the child's self concept.... the prevention of negative self concepts is a vital first step in teaching".[10]

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[9] Purkey, William W., Self Concept and School Achievement, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970, pp. 1, 2, 3.

[10] _____ Ibid, pp. 40, 43.

Since 1960 there has been a fresh and invigorating amount of research into the relationship between the self concept and academic achievement. Categories are: (1) the relation between the self and success in school;(2) how the successful student views himself; and (3) how the unsuccessful student sees himself". (p.15)

Purkey names in his introductory chapter, "Brief History of Theories of the Self", those psychologists and learning theorists who began rigorous experimentation on the individual's perception of himself and his situation as a major influence on his behavior. Among those listed are the research and writing of Brookover (1959, 1962, 1964, 1967), Heider (1958), Patterson (1959, 1961), Combs (1965, 1969), Diggory (1966), and Coopersmith (1967). (p.7)

He concludes that (1) the self is organized and dynamic; (2) that to the experiencing individual the self is the center of his personal universe; (3) that everything is observed, interpreted, and comprehended from this personal vantage point, (4) that human motivation is the product of the universal striving to maintain, protect and enhance the self.

Coopersmith's study develops conditions that contribute to the formation of self-esteem which he defines as:

> "the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself. Self-esteem may vary across

> different areas of experience and according to sex, age, and other self-defining conditions. .... attitudes toward the self, like other orientations and dispositions may be either conscious or unconscious. Thus the individual need not be aware of his attitudes toward himself, but they will nontheless be expressed in his voice, his posture, gestures, and performance".[11]

How an individual perceives himself is vital to his growth. Most instruments used in evaluating self perception are self reports. While it is claimed that self reports may show some contamination, they are significant to and permit inferences valuable to assessment.

A list of some self reports follows:

1. Baum's Self Concept as Learner Scale (a self-report)
2. The Sarbin Adjective Check List
3. California Psychological Inventory
4. The Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test
5. Sale Concept Scale of the Machover: The Draw A-Person Test
6. Bledsoe Self Concept Scale
7. California Test of Personality (A Self-Report Inventory)
8. Coopersmith's The Self Esteem Inventory
9. Tennessee Self Concept Scale
10. Self-Appraisal Scale
11. Q-Sort

It is believed there is a continuous interaction between the self and academic achievement. Each directly influences the other to a significant degree. It appears that enhancing the self concept is vital to academic improvement.

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[11] Coopersmith, Stanley, The Antecedents of Self Esteem, San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1967, p. 4.

John Roueche and John Pitman in their book, A Modest Proposal: Students Can Learn, argue cogently for "a positive social philosophy for the community college--a philosophy which provides a supportive environment" for the new, non-traditional student coming in increasingly greater numbers to the college "near to home" (Cross, 1968, Florida State University Department of Education, 1963, p. 1). Roueche and Pitman (1972) further assert:

> "Community college students have different needs. Poor students are in the majority. They cut across racial, ethnic, and class lines. The open-door policy produces a heterogeneous student body representative of the total population. Community colleges must expect and provide for students from the lower two-thirds of the academic spectrum--an important yet frequently ignored fact."[12]

The authors describe characteristics of the non-traditional student. He has low economic status, low social status, low educational achievement, low self-esteem and diminished self-concept.

Cross (1968, 1974); Gleazer (1963); Medsker and Trest (1965); Bloom (1968); and others support the view that we must apply more knowledge of learning theory and better techniques of teaching in order to meet the special needs of the new student.

The community college as a comprehensive, open-door, student centered, community based institution of higher education is charged with the responsibility of investigating first how the student feels about himself in the learning environment.

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[12] Roueche, John and Pitman, John, A Modest Proposal: Students Can Learn, San Francisco, California, Jossey-Bass Inc., 1972, p.7.

In conclusion, it is not the intention of the writer, an instructor in composition and English literature, to develop learning components and self concept in depth. As it was inferred earlier, the special focus of this paper is on woman's self concept which follows immediately. In the progress of developing this practicum, the writer attended the California School of Professional Psychology in Fresno for 3 months in order to validate some of the massive data collected from various libraries, universities and public agencies.

> "the evidence is collecting that what a person does, and who he believes himself to be in general, is a function of what people around him expect him to be and what the overall situation in which he is acting implies that he is".
> Naomi Weisstein in Psychology Constructs the Female, Soc. Ed. 35, (April, 1971) pp. 362, 373.

WOMEN'S SELF CONCEPT AND SELF ESTEEM

The growing concern for women and women's rights has in the last few years stimulated a fusillade of research on women. Much of this literature seeks to understand women's plight in terms of genetic substrate, early family relations, and most importantly the social and cultural influences which have engendered stereotype sex role differentiation. Today, it is believed an evolution of sex-role attitudes and expectations is inevitable and is readily exemplified by the radical increase in women's participation in the work force (Parelius, 1975). Yet, despite these behavioral and societal changes, discrimination against women still persists and a trend toward egalitatianism is not indicated for the immediate future. As Bem and Bem (1970, p. 22) point out, "discriminatory ideology is still with us, though recently it has been obscured by an egalitarian veneer and become largely non-conscious. . ." Furthermore, while the feminist movement has made us aware of discrimination, the forces of resistance may deflect change toward equality since the liberation of women threatens both sexes (Bardwick, 1973).

Apparently, the feminist movement over the last decade has not liberated the woman, but rather it has left her confused and anxious and in conflict about her role in society. This is said not to denigrate the accomplishments of the Women's Liberation Movement, but rather to point out the fact that radical change, meaning a restructuring of attitudes and cognitions, must be preceded by a period of cognitive dissonance

(Hilgard, 1964).

Cultural stereotyping has not only created a division of roles for each sex, but it has also created personality characteristics that are consistent with these respective roles. A recent study in Massahusetts verified stereotypically masculine and feminine traits which were perceived as most socially desirable. Achievement is considered to be a "masculine" trait; affiliation is viewed as a "feminine" trait.

Some masculine traits included the following: aggressiveness, independence, logic, adventurousness, self-confidence, ambition, and a repression of emotional response. Valued female traints included these: talkativeness, gentleness, tactfulness, awareness of other people's feelings, religiousness, and a strong need for security (Naffziger and Naffziger, 1974). While men have engaged in careers and tasks that require competitiveness and autonomy, women have become dependent, passive and cautious (Bardwick, 1973). They have learned to fulfill their achievement needs and self-esteem through their husbands and children rather than through their own accomplishments. These "feminine" traits which have been rewarded and cultivated in women for generations are precisely the psychological qualities which are not functional in a competitive career environment. Also, we live in a culture that places the highest value on vocational achievements and rewards. Male supremacy in these areas have imbued women with a deep sense of inferiority (O'Leary, 1974). Furthermore, Cross (1971) views women as having a diminished self-concept because they have not been a part of the dominating class. As Learner (1970, p. 216) points out, "it appears that

girls, as they grow up, learn to value boys more and themselves less".

The underlying factors which have inhibited vocational as well as psychological growth in women are low self-esteem and a negative self concept. A woman has learned to perceive her personality qualities and societal role as second rate (Learner, 1970; O'Leary, 1974; Beuf, 1974). In a personality test situation, women had lower self-esteem scores than those of men (Learner, 1970). Societal acknowledgement and expectations of traditional "feminine" characteristics in women, in turn, fulfill their prediction (Bardwick, 1973). The implications of low self-esteem are disastrous for many women. O'Leary (1974) found that the level of self-esteem directly influences the type of task that one will engage in as well as the task performance itself. He further states that an individual's self cognition is largely obtained from working at various tasks. The extent of these qualities ultimately depends on the intrinsic values assigned to various tasks by the social structure. O'Leary concluded that a woman's negative self-concept may be viewed as a barrier to her achievement strivings. The woman is caught in a double bind; she will choose a task that is most congruent with her self-perceptions such as a housewife or sex-role affiliation occupations, i.e., nursing, elementary school teaching, sales and secretarial positions (Manis and Mochizuki, 1972; Almquist, 1974) which only enhances her self-expectations of nominal capabilities. Putnam and Hansen (1972) report a woman's self-concept is significantly related to vocational maturity which is expressed by the awareness of various choices in career opportunities, and by the knowledge of skills required

for each. It was also found that the lower a person's self-esteem, the greater the anxiety. There is a tendency to assume a societally prescribed role (Bardwick, 1971). Astin (1975, pp. 426) states in agreement that "mediators such as self-concept and self-esteem and liberal and non-traditional views of feminine roles and of female sexuality are important factors in career decisions of young women". As most literature suggests, women suffer from a lack of confidence and self-esteem. This renders them more vulnerable to a fear of failure which, in turn, affects their selection of achievement goals.

Studies dealing with the achievement motivation of women have shown that women who prefer traditional homemaking orientations are characterized by low achievement motivation or high affiliation motivation (Oliver, 1974).

There are differences one may speculate about relative to young women who are career-oriented and those who are work-oriented. Richardson states,"that the career-oriented woman deviates from the traditional feminine role in that she has a long term career goal which is central to her future plans". On the other hand, the work-oriented woman appears to have integrated her career and homemaking roles in the direction of more traditional feminine occupations (Richardson, 1974, pp. 161-172).

Women, who prefer careers as a central orientation, rate higher in achievement motivation than women who, prefer stereotypic roles. The underlying factor which apparently determine's a woman's proclivity for either a career or more traditional role depends upon which parent she most strongly identifies with. Connel and Johnson (1970) reported that

female identification with the opposite sex was associated with the highly regarded traits of self-esteem and personal adjustment. Lozoff (1970) concurs with this conclusion in showing father-identified-college-females engendered the masculine qualities of autonomy and independence. Heilbrun, et al., (1974) have shown that father-similar-girls demonstrated a stronger preference for the contemporary women's role than did mother-similar girls. These findings suggest that the incorporation of masculine traits into the women's personality may differentially (positively) affect their overall estimation of self-worth and, therefore, their achievement strivings. Though most of the literature indicates a strong father-identification as an etiology for the divergence from the female role, Baruch (1974) found identification motivation related to role status and role satisfaction of the mother with role status being highest with mothers who worked or had a career. Furthermore, modeling or identifying with a career mother had a much more positive emotional influence on the daughter, than did identifying with the father figure. While the adoption of masculine traits has enhanced the woman's self-concept, those characteristics which are closely tied to sex role inappropriate behavior has produced emotional instability, role conflict and depression. Standley and Soule (1974) in a study of professional women showed that 56 percent of their subjects reported poor adjustment to their role, high anxiety and emotional problems. Sixty-three percent of these women also said that they preferred their fathers to their mothers. Richardson (1974) also found that women, who foresaw a career salience in their lives, were afflicted with high

anxiety due to role conflict, while women who adopted home orientations did not suffer any such feelings. It appears that professional and successful women "pay the price in anxiety" for divergence from the conventional female role.

The anxiety and role conflict experienced by women stem from a deep conviction that success is associated with loss of femininity, personal or societal destruction, and, ultimately, social rejection (Gornick, 1972). A poll taken of feminist women indicated that the majority believed that men did not want to marry women like themselves (Parelius, 1975). Here the woman clearly faces a problem that is unique to her sex. Society views the ideal woman as an expressive individual lacking in the masculine attributes of logic and drive. If she feels a lack of competency characteristics usually ascribed to men, she may suffer from a lack of confidence concerning her achievement. If she feels that she possesses the potential to manifest these masculine qualities and allows them to surface, she fears that she may be rendering herself less than a woman and negating her feminity. If the role conflict and fear rejection are strong enough, the dilemna could easily result in a suppression of achievement striving. Matina Horner (1969) identified a motive to avoid success to explain the anxiety aroused in females when they are pitted against men in competitive situations. Horner says in "Fail: Bright Women" (Psychology Today, November, 1969, p. 62), "If a woman sets out to do well, she bumps into a number of obstacles. She learns that it really isn't ladylike to be too intellectual, so she no longer strives in her attainments, and the motive to avoid success is born". This phenoma of a woman's 'will to fail' is

based on the assumption that females perceive competitiveness and self confidence as masculine and not feminine. Cross (1971) reported that girls in a classroom situation felt nervous and insecure. She attributed these feelings to an approach-avoidance conflict caused by the need to compete in school, after they had previously been taught non-competitiveness.

College females in a competitive situation with males reported lower expectancies and confidence, than when they were working alone (House, 1973). Also in a similar test situation with Australian students, Feather and Raphelson (1973) elicited fear of success responses to the Anne cues of the TAT (Thematic Apperception Test) procedure from both males and females. The study indicated that negative response on the part of males indicate their awareness for potentially negative consequences if the female succeeded in a male dominated occupation.

The motive to avoid success prevails largely in women who find themselves in a competitive situation. A woman who adheres to the traditional feminine role is never confronted with this internal conflict. For those women who do venture out into the male world, the uncertainty and conflicts may prove to be overwhelming. Indeed Baruch (1966) demonstrated a decline in the achievement motivation among women during their twenties and early thirties when concerns for marriage and child rearing were most salient.

Among numerous ongoing studies is a promising program developed by counselors, Manis and Mochizuki, "Search for Fulfillment: A Program for Adult Women", (Personnel and Guidance Journal, March 1972, pp. 596-598)

in which the authors offer goals relative to improved self concept as an aid to academic success. Also cited here is the brilliant, statistical study, Occupation: Housewife, by Lopata which traces woman's pattern of dependency from parents to husband, thus never developing a sense of personal identity. This results in feelings of depression, fear of taking risks or making decisions. (Lopata, 1971)

The review of the literature has suggested several possible barriers that may inhibit women in their vocational and intellectual achievements. Obviously, there is no easy solution. But it is imperative that professionals then, such as counselors and teachers who are in constant encounter with women, understand and become aware of the unique crisis that faces women today. Women's conflicts and uncertainties are only signs of real growth. As Schlossberg (1974, pp. 137-139) points out, "consciousness raising does not mean that every woman must aspire to enter a masculine field or even to achieve a career. . . The goal is to develop human beings who are free to act in ways appropriate to their interests and values, not to their sex".

We note that self concept and self esteem, as well as liberal and non-traditional views of feminine roles, are important concerns in career decisions of continuing and returning women students.

(CONTINUATION) REVIEW OF LITERATURE

SEX ROLE DIFFERENTIATION: A REVIEW OF SOCIAL LEARNING AND GESTALT THEORIES

One definition of stereotype as cited by Naffziger and Naffziger states:

> Sexual stereotypes are assumed differences, social conventions, and expectations. Most stereotypes are well-known to all of us, for they are simple-not to say simple minded. Men are smart, women are dumb but beautiful, etc. (Howe, 1971).

It appears that "once we have cast a person, we tend to keep him in the role whether or not that role is correct". (Naffziger and Naffziger, 'Development of Sex Role Stereotypes', 1974, p. 252). The basis for sex-role stereotyping is founded on presumably innate sex differences. But as Howe (1971) points out, sex differences can generally be ascribed to training and social learning at this time. It is impossible to determine exactly the true nature of either sex. There is no hard, scientific evidence of innate sexual differences, therefore, it is claimed, social factors in the development of the individual are rendered more important than physiological ones.

Social learning theory maintains that the growth of the individual and development of behaviors and attitudes results from environmental influence that impinge on the organism. Environmental action is believed to be the cause growth or the accumulation of behaviors. Skinner (1953) contends there is a continuity between all operants (learned behaviors) which constitutes a general law of the growth of

social and personal behavior. That is to say, that novel responses do not suddenly emerge in the individual, but rather result from long periods of operant conditioning which reinforce his successive approximations to desired behavior. However, social learning theorists generally believe that the mechanism of learning social responses involves another aspect, namely, that of observing and then imitating a social model. Acquisition of the imitative behavior depends on whether the individual is rewarded for his responses. The maintenance or extinction of the mimetic responses is contingent upon the environmental schedules of reinforcement (Ferster and Skinner, 1957); Skinner, 1953, 1968, 1971).

Miller and Dollard (1941) suggest that a child's tendency to imitate is an acquired secondary drive which can account for much of the parental identification process. They postulate that instead of trial and error learning,the child spontaneously imitates the behaviors of others,which in itself is a learned behavior. When he does this, they contend, his social environment reinforces him and thereby reinforces his tendency to imitate. Mimicking becomes a social or secondary motive for the child to copy responses that he himself has not previously made.

According to Bandura (1961, pp.311) reinforcement of imitative behavior is the basis of most socialization. He says. . . "that through the repeated association of imitative behavior,with reward,the child becomes motivated to behave like the parent. In other words, imitative behavior becomes rewarding itself."[13]

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[13]Bandura, A., and Houston, A., "Identification as a Process of Incidental Learning", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 63, 1961, p. 311.

The principles of Miller and Dollard (1941) can be applied to a variety of social situations for which sex differentiation is cultivated. A young girl is rewarded for imitating her mother and, therefore, generalizes her imitation to others of the same sex. Implicit in this example is a learned discrimination between those to be imitated and those not to be imitated.

Kagan (1958) hypothesizes that the child identifies with his parents because he observes that they have the "power" to control the resources for nurturance and other goals. He, therefore, desires their status and tries to emulate them with the assumption that he will thereby acquire their"power". Consequently, the child will assume the role of his parents in fantasy play, which enhances the overt enactment of that role in the future. By means of fantasy play, the child identifies with his parents and retains that ideal guide for his subsequent behavior. Mowrer (1950) in a similar theory attempts to integrate social learning theories on imitation with psychoanalytic hypothesis on identification.

According to Mowrer, a parent provides for a child's primary drives, such as food and affections. Since the parents are performing other behaviors at the same time, these behaviors also become rewarding (secondary reinforcers). As he imitates the other behaviors of his parents, he is essentially rewarding himself. Thus, he comes to identify with his parents.

A general developmental view of social learning theorists is that the individual is selectively rewarded for imitative responses that

are deemed appropriate by the social environment. Identification then, is a gradual learning of many imitative responses forming a coherent personality (Langer, 1969).

For example, as the influences of the women's movement gain more momentum and support, stereotype sex-role behavior will be rewarded less and will thereby decrease and possibly ultimately become extinct. This method of treatment is therefore, a counter-condition in which undesirable behavior is punished by withdrawal of reward (social acceptance) and a new behavior is installed because it has become socially appropriate.

Bandura (1965), like Skinner contends that operant conditioning principles have been least successful in dealing with the acquisition of novel responses, particularly new social responses. According to Bandura, the solution lies in the mechanism of imitation.

For example, Bandura and Huston (1960) showed that children displayed social learning from incidental imitation of a nurturing model. In this situation affection and nurturance in an adult-child interaction enhanced the learning of incidental behaviors of the parents. Similarly, in one experiment on aggressive behavior, children observed a model who beat up a doll in a specific manner (Bandura, 1965). The children imitated the model's behavior even though they had not been instructed to do so. From this experiment Bandura concluded that learning novel responses is a consequence of observing behaviors of others who are accepted as models.

Performing novel responses is determined by reinforcement.

Bandura's theory of modeling and acquisition of new responses can readily be applied to the problem of role conflict in women. The problem is lack of non-traditional role models which could otherwise heighten the probability of women seeking careers.

Baruch (1974) found that working mothers served as the most successful type of role model, for they exhibited a combination of work and family and expressed satisfaction with their lifestyles.

In a study conducted by Joesting and Joesting (1972) 26 percent of all women subjects in a class taught by a male instructor said there was nothing good about being a woman. But in a similar class taught by a female instructor, only 5 percent of all females enrolled quoted the above.

Bandura (1965) claims there are three rather different effects that occur when subjects are exposed to the behavior of models. First, there is the modeling effect which is reproduced by the observer. Second, exposure to models may also strengthen or weaken inhibitor responses in the observer. These inhibiting and disinhibiting effects are most evident when the frequency of imitative responses increase or decrease. In addition, he states, rewarding consequences may result in vicarious extinction of inhibitory responses.

Exposure to nontraditional role models should engender disinhibitory effect for many women providing the response is reinforced. Finally, behavior of models may elicit previously learned responses in the observer if they bear some resemblance to those exhibited by the model. This response facilitation effect may be observed in women who

continue their career after a long period of absence, providing their renewed interest in a career was due to the observation of a model.

For Gestalt theorists the principle of learning is concerned with perceptual changes. The process of learning can be seen as an accumulation of memory traces of environmental experiences which are organized into wholes or gestalten.

These memory traces, often considered small or partial insights, constitute gradual learning by trial and error. The phenomena of insight results from an overlearning and allows for perceptual reorganization.* (See Note below)

Lewin's system discusses learning in terms of goal motivation and social behavior, and is termed "life space". This concept includes total number of variables which determine the behavior of a given individual at any given time. In effect, Lewin created a psychological environment. It is comparable to Koffka's behavioral environment as perceived and understood by the person. The objects in psychological environment, as cited, have positive or negative "valence" - - positive - if they are likely to fulfill one's present needs, and negative if they threaten injury. Objects of positive valence attract the individual, while a negative valence object repels him. This attraction is a force or "vector" that directs the individual toward his goal object. Often the vectors will be impeded or completely blocked by a barrier. A barrier is a constraint which has no valence at the outset and exerts no force unless force is exerted on it, and it usually tends to offer a certain amount of resistance.*

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*Note: Lewin, Kurt, as cited in Learning: A Survey of Psychological Interpretations, (ed.) Winfred F. Hill, Scranton, Chandler Publishing Co., 1971, pp. 106-115.

To exemplify this, let us say that a young woman desires to increase her knowledge. This awakening need or desire puts the woman into a state of tension and an object is found - a more lucid example would be to consider the case of a woman with high motivation achievement. This need again creates a state of tension. Career involvement then acquires a positive valence. A vector then motivates the woman toward her goal. An appropriate barrier in this particular situation might be the fear of success that suppresses achievement strivings and produces more tension.

Festinger (1957) is another theorist who emphasized growth as occurring from a discrepancy between one's cognitions and behaviors. It is hypothesized that if a relatively permenent behavioral change occurs, Festinger states, one's cognitive process will in time become consistent with the new behavior.

Let us conjecture a woman returning to school. This would satisfy the need and, therefore, acquires positive valence. A vector is set up and moves the individual toward the goal. (The vector in this case would be the course of action needed for matriculation). But once in school the woman finds out that she does not possess the needed confidence to compete and drops out of school. The lack of confidence in this case would constitute a barrier. Resistance by the barrier will only add to the initial frustration which was a desire for knowledge. Growth takes place from experiencing these tensions and restructuring the cognitive map until all needs can be met without undue frustration.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURE

DESIGN OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire used in this study was designed by Judith Berman Brandenburg, Assistant Professor and Counseling Psychologist, Department of Student Personnel, Queens College of the City University of New York. It was modified with her permission and suggestions relative to the target population of Fresno City College. Dr. Brandenburg originated and developed "core courses" and a re-entry program, WOMEN INVOLVED IN NEW GOALS, (WING), at CUNY, Queens. Questions 5-10 of her original questionnaire were deleted and others concerned with feelings about studying in a new environment were substituted. (See Appendix A for questionnaire).

SAMPLE

The questionnaire was given to instructors throughout the divisions of the college with directions in a cover letter asking that they be distributed to those women only who were returning to school after an interruption for marriage or a job. It was to be taken home and filled out at the student's leisure and returned personally to the

writer's office and then obtain a free book. One hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed during two semesters, Spring and Fall, 1975.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Since this is primarily a descriptive study, the only statistics used are frequency counts and percentages.

Questionnaires were collected from 90 women between the ages of 20 and 49. After a preliminary reading of the questionnaires, it was found that most of them (82 out of 90) fell into three groups, which will be referred to as Type I, Type II, Type III. The data analysis in Chapter (4) is based on these 82 cases.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

(A) EIGHT MOST COMMON PROBLEMS

Women were asked to describe in short answer form, problems they had encountered at Fresno City College. Although numerous problems were mentioned, eight emerged as being most frequently experienced. They are:

(1) In general, women of all types shared one problem in common, namely - shortage of time. This came up again and again and was ranked first by all groups.

(2) The second most common problem was anxiety. This involved feelings of inadequacy, self-consciousness about age, and general disorientation to the college environment.

(3) Role conflict was also mentioned frequently, tying for second place with anxiety. Problems relative to role conflict were expressed as concerns about not keeping up with housework, feelings of guilt about neglecting the children or husband, and uncertainty about how high a priority to give to school work. This problem was found primarily among married women.

(4) Money problems were fourth in frequency and were found mostly among the single women.

(5) Child care was fifth on the list, and, naturally, ranked higher for those women with small children at home.

(6) Next on the list was concern about study skills. Several women mentioned that they had been out of school for a long time, and they felt inadequate in this area.

(7) Counseling deficiencies at Fresno City College were next on the list. Several women expressed a desire to have counseling oriented more toward the older, returning woman student and thereby help her to adjust to school.

(8) Several women mentioned that they had had problems with instructors. They felt the instructors looked down on older women, or treated them like high school students.

The number and percentages of women mentioning these problems may be found in Table 4.1.

4. (B) FAMILY ATTITUDES

In addition to the problems mentioned above, respondents were asked to comment on the reactions of their families to their returning to school. Most of the answers fell into two categories:

(1) Those indicating that the family supported the return to school.

(2) Those indicating that the family objected to, resented, or felt threatened by her return to school.

Of those participants who could be so categorized (75 of the 82), most (60%) of the women reported that their families were not supportive. The other 40% indicated that the family approved and was supportive. The fact that over half of the re-entry women at Fresno City College are here despite the objections of their families is the most striking finding of this study.

4. (C) DIVISION OF PROBLEMS

INTO

PRACTICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OR INTERPERSONAL

Of the eight (8) major problems four (4) were seen as practical:

(1) time, (2) money, (3) child care, (4) study skills. Sample responses were:

> "School and tests put pressure on my family life and cuts down on time spent with kids". . . "I have a lot of interruptions at home" . . . "I haven't time to give my children a complete meal" . . . "I work forty hours at Sears and baby sit at night so that I can go to school" . . . "constant problem is lack of money and having to continue work and school" . . . "there's constant hassel trying to get a baby sitter" . . . "I wish I didn't have to work so hard to get baby sitters so that I could go to school" . . . "I have such trouble getting kids to the child care center" . . . "when kids get sick, school work suffers" . . . I need a speed reading class and a writing course" . . . "I need a marketable skill" . . . "need a class in how to study effectively" . . . "I have a second chance to upgrade skills."

Four problems were seen as psychological or interpersonal:

(1) role conflict, (2) anxiety, (3) counseling, (4) instructors.

Participants responded with following comments:

> "he made himself an 'ex' when I came back to school" . . . "lack of support from my husband" . . . "I have to earn good grades or else!" . . . " my husband does not feel that self-expression and fulfillment are valid reasons for returning to school." . . . "my family has been verbally supportive but physically has not risen to household needs." . . . My husband thinks I'll be smarter" . . . "we don't go out much. . . he feels I'm growing away from him . . . complains about my studying . . . when I'm studying for a test, everybody wants to eat . . . complains my

my house is messy. . . . I'm nervous being in school with such bright young people. . I'm afraid of sounding dumb. . . I'm not able to find references in the library. . . I need to get some emotional problems out of my way. . . the hardest thing to do is to express myself orally." "I feel counselors could be more instructive in what classes to take." . . . counselors are needed for older students. . . .we have to learn to cope with interpersonal relationships. The CLEP (COLLEGE LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM) should be given to older students. . . . Some of us are professionals and need upgrading . . . let students have credit they deserve and move on. . . need special counseling to learn how to get along with different age groups. Older students have different problems than 18 year olds. . . . the picky, piddling things done at Fresno City College . . . one instructor locks the door if you are late. . . . . If Johnny acts sick, I have to scout around for a baby sitter. . . the instructor should be more human. We aren't all 18 years old." . . . . instructors should open their eyes to the type of students in attendance. . . . some look down on older students . . . . they should give us credit for life experiences."

4. (D) EXPLANATION OF RE-ENTRY TYPES

Three types were discerned from the data:

Type I Woman

She is single, mostly in her 20's and 30's, probably divorced or separated, with children to support. She is the head of the household and is looking for a career -- a good job with good pay. Her problems are: (1) time, (2) money, (3) child care. She is very practical, knows where she is going. She is confident and purposive.

Type II Woman

She is married, in her 20's or 30's; her children are at home. She may be going to school to seek a career, but she is also there for fulfillment. Some said they were seeking job skill, for a second income, or "just in case." Her problems, in addition to time, are: (1) anxiety

("why am I here?"); (2) role-conflict ("am I a wife or a student?"). She has guilt feelings about her dual role; (3) she has a hostile family. Her problems are more psychological than practical. She lacks self-confidence.

Type III Woman

She is married, in her 30's or 40's, her children are 14 years and up (some have left home or near to leaving home). She is going to school to fill in the empty time, or to get a job to fill in the empty time. Her problems are, on addition to time, (1) anxiety, (2) role-conflict. She would like special counseling to deal with her psychological needs. She is also more concerned with study skills than are the other women.

Type II and III differ from Type I mainly in marital status. Type II differs from Type III mainly in the age of children.

4. (E) ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS BY TYPES

(1) Type I Woman (Single, Head of Family)

Her perceptions of problems are most practical in nature, i.e., time, money, child care, and study skills. She reports the following data:

> "I need financial aid to remain in school.... there's a problem with Welfare Department who'll cut off my money when my son turns 6.... I doubt I'll be able to go to the university.... the main problem is money for books here, and over there there will be tuition, too .... I have trouble finding a reliable baby sitter.... I have to get the kids up at 5 a.m. so that I can get to my LVN hospital classes.... Fresno City College should help fund education for older women.... I know I have to have updated skills and a job which will help me raise my kids.... I know I need help in studying... in reading and writing.... I want to communicate better.... I want a good job with a future".

(2) Type II Woman (Married, Young Children at Home, in her 20's or 30's)

She is going to school for personal fulfillment or to get a job for second income or "just in case".

Her problems are more psychological than Type I's problems. After time, role-conflict, anxiety, special counseling, she reports particular emphasis on the need to improve study skills.

She is uncertain about her ability to achieve and often faces resistance to her return to school from husband, family and friends.

Her self report reveals more stressful factors existing in the home environment as well as in the school setting:

> "I want to find my own identity.... I need interests outside the home.... I need confidence.... I'm worried about the shortness of my temper because of pressure of tests.... I see myself as having many potentials that were going unused and I discovered I wanted to find out what they were and put them to use.... My husband still wants me to sit with him and

> watch TV while he sleeps in front of it.... I have to organize my time.... my family knows what is expected of them.... we are now free to pursue our own interests.... I need to find myself as a person.... my husband calls me a mental midget. Why am I here?....am I a wife or a student?.... We've had to turn down invitations because a paper is due.... I expect to be always kind of strained trying to be wife, mother, housekeeper and wage-earner. School has definitely upset my home life and relations with my kids. My husband feels threatened because he accepted a job he doesn't care for in order to let me go back to school. I'm tired and rushed and I try never to study in the afternoon because I get too upset with my children.... life is more hectic. My seven year old does not accept my additional role of student.. instructors should understand difficulties in meeting deadlines for papers. How will I be accepted by students fresh out of high school.... I had no high school diploma. Well, it boils down to getting a divorce, abandoning my children, or just let him have to live and adjust. I need to know how budget my time and how to study... I have no confidence. I need help in dealing with my family and myself. I feel guilty about being in school. I need a speed reading class".

(3) Type III Woman (Married, Older Children)

Like the Type II woman, Type III woman's problems are more psychological than practical. In fact, other than time, she ranks all the practical problems at the bottom of the list (especially, money and child care).

She reports as her concerns role conflict, anxiety and particularly, problems relative to counseling and instructors. These last named problems distinguish her from Type II. She suffers from the "empty nest" syndrome. Her children are 14 years and older, who have left home or are near to leaving home. She has spent most of her life as mother, wife and homemaker.

> "What do I do with my time? Who am I? Why am I depressed? Why do I feel I have failed? I feel counselors could be more instructive in what classes to take. Counselors are needed for older students. Some instructors treat us like kids. I've had certain life experiences. One instructor locks the door if you're one minute late. Some instructors look down at older students. I don't think counselors are interested in helping older students. I need to get some emotional problems out of the way".

4. (F) FAMILY ATTITUDES BY TYPE

All types of women reported significant non-support from their families, but Type II reported it most of all. This may be due to the presence of small children. Type III, on the other hand, received the most support from their families. (See Tables 4.5 and 4.6)

TABLE 4.1

EIGHT MOST COMMON PROBLEMS IN
RANK ORDER FOR ALL 3 TYPES OF WOMEN

N=82

PROBLEM	# MENTIONING PROBLEM	% MENTIONING PROBLEM
1) Time	26	32%
2) Anxiety	18	22%
3) Role Conflict	18	22%
4) Money	15	18%
5) Child Care	12	15%
6) Study Skills	10	12%
7) Counseling	9	11%
8) Instructors	9	11%

TABLE 4.2

COMPARISON OF RANK ORDERINGS OF PROBLEMS, BY TYPE OF WOMAN

Rank	Problem: Type I (Single, head of household)	Problem: Type II (Married, young children at home)	Problem: Type III (Married, older children)
1	Time	Time	Time
2	Money	Role Conflict	Role Conflict
3	Child Care	Anxiety	Anxiety
4	Study Skills	Money	Counselling
5	Anxiety	Child Care	Instructors
6	Counselling	Instructors	Study Skills
7	Instructors	Study Skills	Money
8	Role Conflict	Counselling	Child Care

= Practical Problems

= Psychological or Interpersonal Problems

TABLE 4.3

PERCENT OF WOMEN REPORTING EIGHT MOST COMMON PROBLEMS,

BY TYPE OF WOMAN

	TYPE I Single, head of household	TYPE II Married, young children at home	TYPE III Married, older children	TOTAL
1) Time	30%	40%	24%	32%
2) Anxiety	15%	27%	24%	22%
3) Role Conflict	7%	33%	24%	22%
4) Money	30%	20%	4%	18%
5) Child Care	22%	20%	0%	15%
6) Study Skills	15%	7%	16%	12%
7) Counseling	11%	3%	20%	11%
8) Instructors	7%	7%	20%	11%

TABLE 4.4

THE EIGHT MOST COMMON PROBLEMS FACED BY RE-ENTRY WOMEN

BY TYPE OF WOMEN

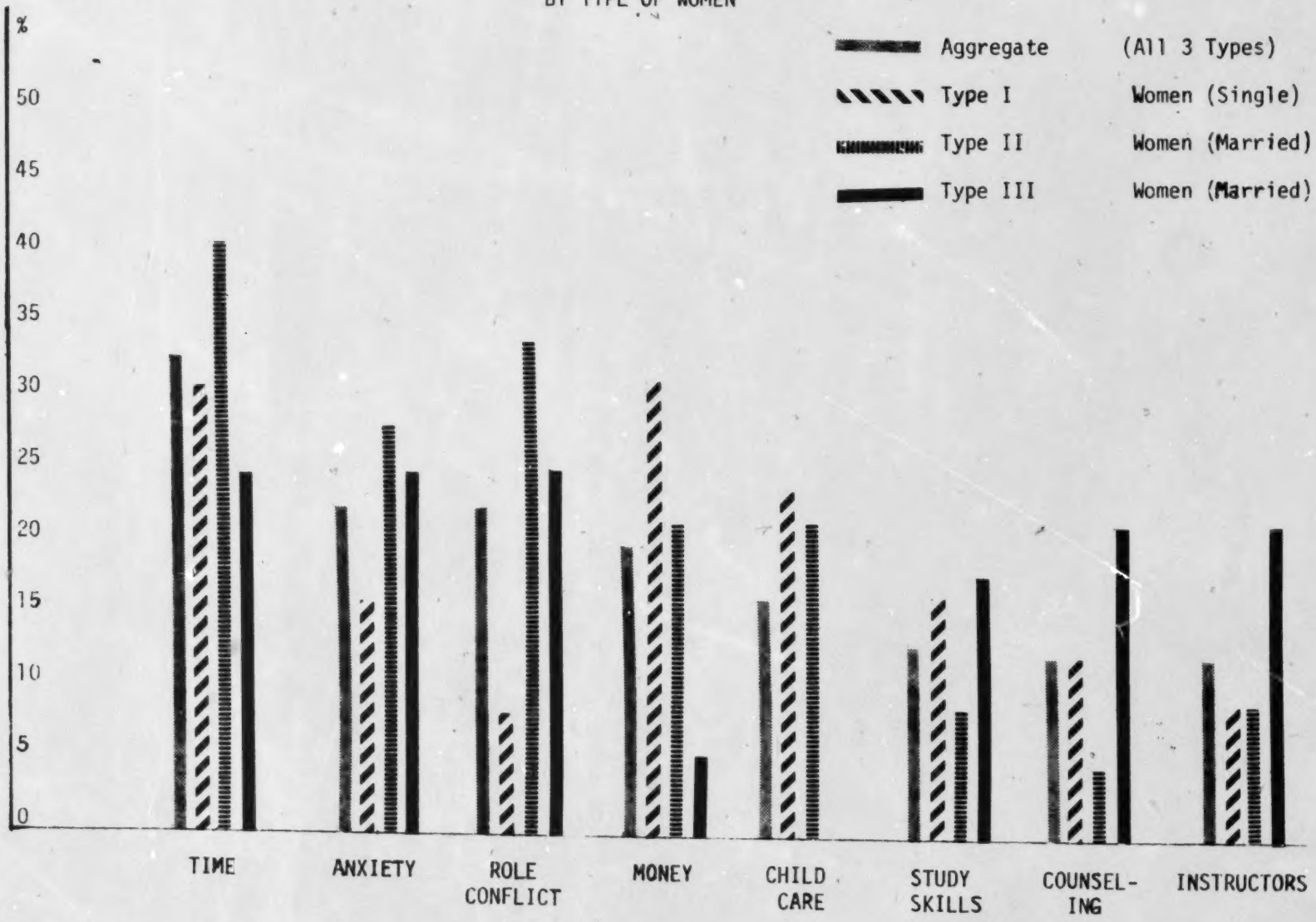


TABLE 4.5

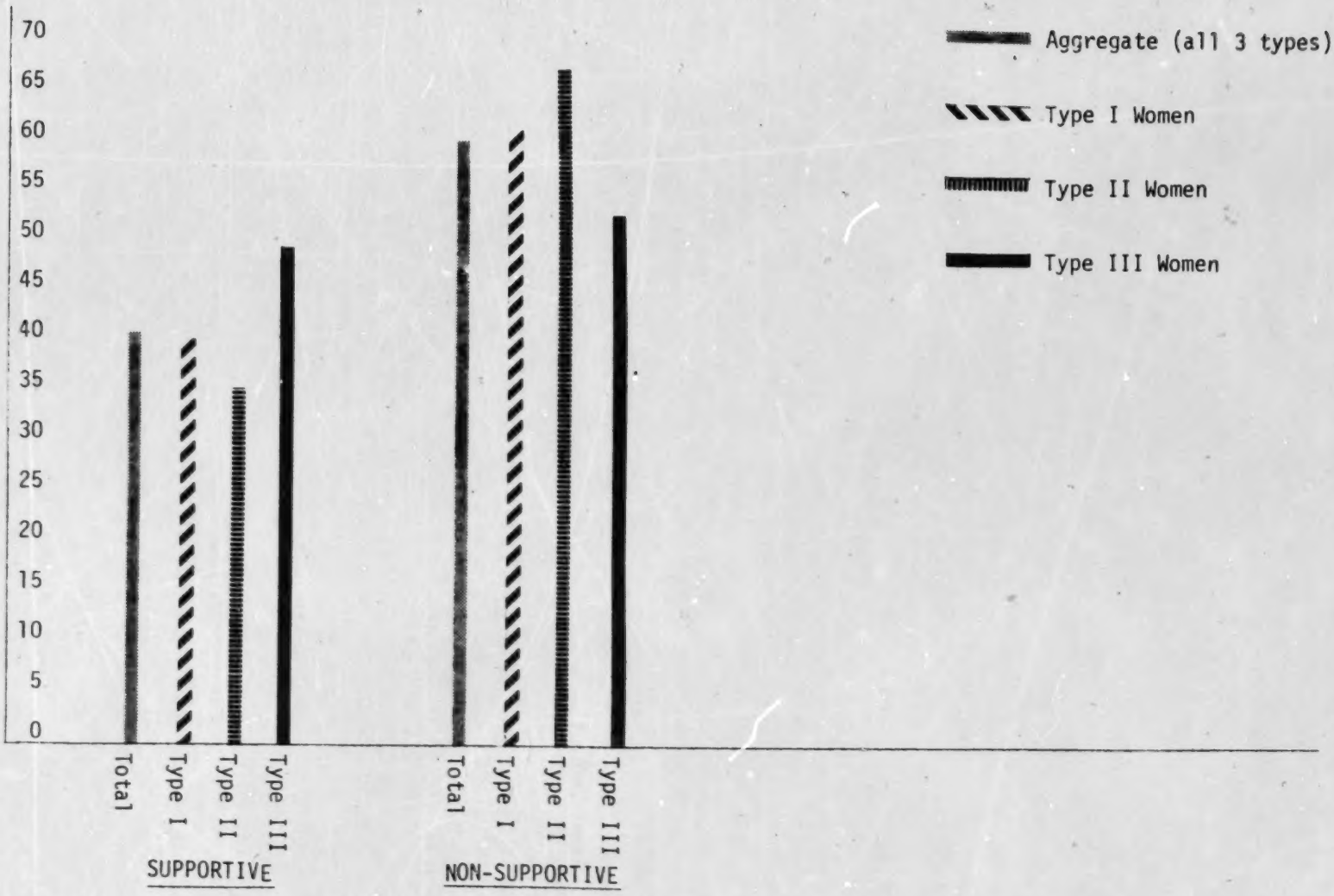
FAMILY ATTITUDES TOWARD RE-ENTRY WOMEN, BY TYPE

(PERCENTAGES)

	TYPE I Single, head of household	TYPE II Married, young children at home	TYPE III Married, older children	TOTAL
SUPPORTIVE	39%	34%	48%	40%
NON-SUPPORTIVE	61%	66%	52%	60%

TABLE 4.6

FAMILY ATTITUDES TOWARD RE-ENTRY WOMEN, BY TYPE OF WOMEN



Chapter 5

SUMMARY

This study describes the special needs of women who are returning to school after an interruption for marriage or a job.

The respondents' concerns, as they appear in a self report are precipitated by the changing role of woman and her confrontation and awareness of options more available now than perhaps a generation ago. The result is an identity crisis, a role conflict, a reassessment of her potential, an expansion of her interests - a need - in fact, for self actualization beyond the traditional and nurturant role. She searches for meaning and place in the world. Her self concept and, more succinctly, her self esteem, relative to academic success and interpersonal relationships was the focus of the present investigation.

The literature about the self and its relevance to woman was discussed in terms of historical background and in the current research and writing of educators, counselors, and other specialists in learning theory.

Generally, the study revealed problems which fell into two classifications: psychological and practical needs. Some concerns she shared in common with 3 types of returning women students thus identified. However, the married woman with young children expressed psychological stress (guilt and role conflict) more strongly than did the others.

It seems that school, while a challenge for some, seriously disorients the new, nontraditional woman student. The community college must seek innovative techniques to alleviate stress and provide support services, especially in her first year of attendance.

Her perceptions of her needs as demonstrated in this study are indeed revealing,and her disclosure in a self report necessitates attention from teachers, counselors, and administrators. Her good mental health is at stake.

Character disorders and disturbances as described by Maslow are seen as:

> "Far more important for the face of the world than classical neuroses or even the psychoses. From this point of view, new kinds of illness are most dangerous, e.g., the dimished or stunted person, i.e., the loss of any of the defining characteristics of humanness or personhood, the failure to grow to one's potential... valuelessness... that is general illness of the personality is seen as any falling short of growth, of self-actualization and the main source of illness (although not the only one) is seen as frustration of the B-values of idiosyncratic potentials, (re the tendency of a person to grow in his own style, at his own pace)" (p. 190).[14]

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[14] Maslow, Abraham, Toward a Psychology of Being, (2nd ed.), New York: Van Nostrand, Reinholt Company, 1968, p. 190.

Chapter 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

Many practical needs are shared by other students on campus. However, additional stress on women and the frequent insensitivity as reported here call for special effort on the part of people in higher education.

On the basis of this study it is recommended that:

(1) Financial Aid Must Be a First Priority

One cannot assume that the returning woman student is being subsidized to attend school. Spouses and, often parents are not supportive ("a man is going to take care of you", is the assumption), and in light of today's divorce rate, is indefensible. A woman frequently drops out because she cannot afford child care and school expenses. Funds should be available whether she desires a traditional or nontraditional education.

Some federal agencies for obtaining "seed" money are:

(a) Higher Education Act (P. L.: 89-329) (HEA, 1965)

(b) Enabler Program

(c) E.O.P.S. (Economic Opportunity Program Services)

(d) Veterans' Benefits

(e) WREP (Women's Re-Entry Programs)

(f) National Endowment for the Study of Humanities

(g) A. A. U. W. (American Association of University Women)

Also, the college should form a local coalition of community and service organizations in connection with financial aid to students.

To the question, "what do you see as your goals or reasons for returning to school?" her answers are both practical and psychological and relative to the latter, suggests serious stresses exist in career choices, counseling, interpersonal relationships.

(2) A Personal Counselor Must Be Available

At present Fresno City College has 13 counselors, 10 men and 3 women. None is a personal counselor. In light of her psychological conflicts, the need for personal counseling is imperative. While there exists a professional attitude (referrals are made to Mental Health Agencies), generally,interviews with 3 counselors indicate minimal emphasis or interest in women's special needs - such as are mentioned in this report. There is an attitude of,"we don't make distinctions regarding sex in our counseling." The evidence indicates they should! One woman counselor admitted that much counseling is dichotomous rather than androgynous. Inasmuch as the older woman reports some resistance to her presence on campus, a personal counselor would help remove this barrier. One avenue would be to inform instructors and admissions personnel via an in-service seminar of the returning woman's needs.

Regarding child care, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has a local office. They have pledged their support. Head Start is the most logical public agency to provide funds. A child development program is gradually expanding on the Fresno City College campus. At present, however, because there is no child care facility, the program for child development cannot generate Title I funding. Ideally, the college should have a child care center combined with an instructional base. Much has to be done.

This study and previous studies indicate the need is urgent as most returning women students discover that child care and increasing costs of school expenses become a constant concern. A temporary "holding" facility on or near campus should help break the high attrition rate until our construction program is finalized.

Heightened morale generally would result in a greater benefit and enhancement of the learning environment. We reconstruct sidewalks, ramps and other structural barriers for handicapped individuals. We can do no less for the battered, returning woman student who faces educational, social, financial barriers.

(3) A Re-Entry Program Federally Funded Must Become Another Priority

One condition for obtaining federal "seed" money is the presence of a child care center and "core courses" designed for undereducated and underdeveloped women (usually welfare recipients). This project must become a total commitment on the part of the institution.

(4) We Can Replicate a Program Particularly Applicable to Community College Students

The writer notes with some positive reaction, the numerous courses for returning women students beginning to grow throughout California. Many are already drawing federal funds. One project seems particularly suited to the 2 year college student given the needs articulated in this study. The project is called: Search for Fulfillment: A Program for Adult Women by Manis and Mochizuki. It combines workshops and specifically states goals and objectives. It will be described briefly.[15]

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[15] Manis, Laura G., Mochizuki, June, 'In the Field', Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 50, No. 7, March 1972. pp. 594-599.

The Workshop Programs

Workshops involved goals which were chosen to meet the need of participants. Three types of activities were scheduled: small group interaction, testing, and homework assignments. Phase I was designed to remove psychological blocks that keep women from the choices they need to make to change life styles. Included were special personal counseling, interviews, tests, evaluating life experiences. Areas of "experiencing" were in education, employment, volunteer work, creative self-expression. Participants experience with others already in the field psychological reactions such as role conflict, feelings of low self worth, loneliness, goallessness, guilt, dependency, and depression.

Objectives

Goal (1): Give support; build trust; share concern; relieve guilt, learn to work in groups.

Exercises: Square Puzzle,
The NASA Moon Landing,
Desert Survival

Goal (2): Learn to communicate, improve interpersonal relations self report, how to solve similar problems.

Goal (3): Build self confidence and understanding of Self and Abilities Tests, Strong Vocational Interest Tests, Wonderlic or General Aptitude Test, Battery and Interview with Kesting psychologists.

Goal (4): Become responsible: Learn to make decisions; take risks. (dependency was the biggest block in changing life styles) emphasis is on psychological needs.

Goal (5): Learn about opportunities of outside world, education, volunteer, employment and creative self-expression.

The results of a program such as described above would assist regular students in career planning and thus help women in becoming aware of the new phases in a woman's life and preparation for other roles in their mature years.

(5) Finally: It Is Recommended That Fresno City College Initiate a Coordinating Committee for the Development of Career Guidance Centers in High Schools as a means of increasing student awareness of problems they may face when they are preparing for careers. Girls of high school age can learn that the period of child bearing years need not be a period of isolation.

(6) Institutional Research Must Continue

Additional studies are strongly recommended. This data should be validated and reassessed in light of continuous research and knowledge accruing in the areas of human growth, behavior, and learning. It is an awesome challenge.

As a dry wit put it, "Don't turn on the light, it will only add to the darkness".

Chapter 7

SUMMARY

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY

Fresno City College offers a very limited program for the special needs for women. The President's Advisory Council on Continuing Education for Women stresses the importance of supportive services to be offered and implemented by the college and the community. To date, the college has neglected a significant segment of the community which it should rightly serve. Therefore, the college must address itself to the development of a positive self concept in the returning woman student. She faces serious obstacles... cultural and environmental -- disorientation in her dual roles, grave financial stress, and need for special counseling. All these are barriers which impede and inhibit learning. The college must face these needs by providing assistance to bridge the gap which women face in an ever-increasing technological society.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

For the Participants

Expected outcomes for participants include: improving self-concept improving confidence; increasing motivation; presenting a positive role model for children; achieving success in personal, educational, and career goals; broadening horizons; and becoming fully functioning, responsible citizens.

For the College

The expected outcome for the college is increased enrollment of women having academic, cultural, and economic limitations.

SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that Fresno City College will, as the result of the findings and recommendations of this practicum, modify current counseling and/or curriculum faculty policies in a manner which will facilitate better educational opportunities for the Fresno area of women who are financially and culturally deprived. Expectations include:

1. Employment of a full-time personal counselor and support staff.
2. Development of an active Women's Center which will serve the needs of female students both day and night.
3. Publicity and action-oriented activities.
4. Expansion of Women's Studies courses to include vocational, professional, technical, and cultural objectives.
5. Advancement of women from an inferior position to one where they are fully functioning in private, civic, and professional life which their educational experiences provide.

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FRESNO CITY COLLEGE

Questionnaire: To Better Serve Returning Women Students

1. Academic status (Special Program--EOP, ENABLER or ? _____

   No. of units _____ Fall _____ Spring _____

2. Age _____

3. Marital status _____ 3a. Occupation if employed _____

4. Children (number, sex, age) _____
   _____
   _____

5. When did you enter Fresno City College? _____
   Is this your first semester at FCC? Yes _____
   No _____

6. Please indicate highest grade completed 9 _____
   10 _____
   11 _____
   (high school) 12 _____
   over 12 _____

7. Rate your anxiety before a test.

   1 2 3 4 5
   (no anxiety) (very anxious)

8. Rate your anxiety about speaking up in class.

   1 2 3 4 5
   (no anxiety) (very anxious)

9. How much time do you have available to study per day?

   (1) less than 1 hour
   (2) 1-2 hours
   (3) more than 2 hours

10. Would you feel comfortable seeking reference material or periodicals in the library?

    yes _____ no _____

11. Do you find it difficult to concentrate on studying for

    (1) 1/2 hr.?
    (2) 1 hr.?
    (3) more than 1 hr.?

12. Do you feel you might profit from a class to improve your study skills?

    yes _____
    no _____

13. What did you see as your goals or reasons for returning to school? _____

14. What are some of the problems or needs you have experienced upon entering and during your return to school?

15. How might these needs be met? _____

16. In what ways, if any, has your return to school affected your family life? _____

17. Is your success in school in any way seen as a threat by members of your family? _____

18. In what ways, if any, has the Women's Center been useful to you? _____

19. Comments: (concerning any aspect of your return to school, e.g., feelings, reactions, etc.)

QUEENS COLLEGE
of THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
FLUSHING · NEW YORK 11367

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS TELEPHONE: 212-445-7500

April 24, 1975

Ms. Lillian Richards
English Department
Fresno City College
1101 East University Ave.
Fresno, Calif. 93741

Dear Lillian,

Thank you for your interest in the WING group and for your lovely letter. We are in the process of organizing and printing some materials regarding WING. I will be glad to share them with you when they are ready. Enclosed is a copy of the questionnaire that I used in my research. Also, we would appreciate receiving any helpful materials that you acquire in this area.

As you already know working with returning women students is most challenging and rewarding. I would be glad to speak with you again if I can be helpful in any way. Good luck in this endeavor.

Cordially,

Judith Berman Brandenburg

Judith Berman Brandenburg, Ph.D.
Asst. Prof., Counseling Service
Faculty Coordinator of
Women Involved in New Goals

JBB:gw
Encl.

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